

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior listings:

1. (Currently Amended) A signal processing device comprising:

commercial message section detecting means for detecting a commercial message section ~~from in~~ an input signal including at least the commercial message section and the remaining signal section on a time division basis, wherein a start time of a commercial message and a length of the commercial message section are detected by the commercial message section detecting means;

a commercial message extracting means for extracting the commercial message in the commercial message section from the input signal in accordance with a result of the detection by the commercial message section detecting means, the commercial message being extracted for subsequent access by a user, the access including playing play back of the commercial message in response to a user selection;

a recording means for recording each commercial message for subsequent access by the user in response to the user selection, ~~the commercial message being extracted from the input signal by the commercial message extracting means;~~

an index information extracting means for extracting information from said commercial message section to be used as a user-selectable index representing said recorded commercial message, the information extracted from said commercial message section and associated with said commercial message being one of a starting image, a cut point image, a starting sound or an ending sound; and

a display means for displaying said index, the display means further playing back a selected commercial message audibly and/or visually in response to a user selection from the index, the index including a plurality of commercial messages recorded by the recording means that are selectable by the user for playback.

2. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 1, further comprising a characteristic value extracting means for extracting a characteristic value characterizing the commercial message from the detected commercial message section, wherein said recording means records each characteristic value of the commercial message in association with the commercial message.

3. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 1, wherein said commercial message section detecting means detects said commercial message section from said input signal on the basis of a characteristic pattern of the commercial message appearing in said input signal at predetermined time intervals and a characteristic value reflecting the probability of the commercial message appearing in the input signal.

4. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 1, wherein said commercial message section detecting means detects said commercial message section on the basis of predetermined guide information which is prepared corresponding to said input signal.

5. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 2, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is amplitude of the signal in the commercial message section.

6. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 2, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is a spectrum of the signal in the commercial message section.

7. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 2, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is a linear prediction coefficient of the signal in the commercial message section.

8. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 2, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is a histogram of a predetermined component of the signal in the commercial message section.

9. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 2, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is a mean value of a predetermined component of the signal in the commercial message section.

10. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 2, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is a difference between two predetermined signal components of the commercial message in the commercial message section.

11. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 2, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is the number of changes of the state of the signal in the commercial message section.

12. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 2, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is the time of the change of the state of the signal in the commercial message section.

13. **(Canceled)**

14. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 1, wherein said index is an edited signal obtained by editing said commercial message.

15. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 14, wherein said edited signal obtained by editing said commercial message comprises a set of signals at the time when the state of said commercial message changes.

16. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 14, wherein said edited signal obtained by editing said commercial message comprises a signal representing one of a starting part of said commercial message and an ending part of said commercial message.

17. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 1, wherein said index information extracting means extracts for the index a portion of the commercial message at a time when the state of said commercial message changes.

18. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 2, further comprising a comparing means for comparing the characteristic values respectively characterizing two commercial messages recorded by said recording means and discarding one of the recorded two commercial messages when the characteristic values of the two commercial messages are determined to be substantially the same.

19. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 18, wherein said comparing means detects agreement/disagreement of the two commercial messages in a part of the commercial message section or in the entire commercial message section by comparing said characteristic values.

20. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 18, wherein said comparing means detects the degree of similarity of the two commercial messages in a part of the commercial message section or in the entire commercial message section by comparing said characteristic values.

21. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 18, wherein said comparing means performs the comparing operation on a basis of a distance as determined by using a predetermined distance scale between vectors corresponding to the two commercial messages, the respective vector of each of the two commercial messages formed from at least one of the amplitude of the signal in the commercial message section, the spectrum of the signal in the commercial message section, the linear prediction coefficient of the signal in the commercial message section, the histogram of a predetermined component of the signal in the commercial message section, the mean value of the predetermined component of the signal in the commercial message section, a difference between two predetermined signal components of the signal in the commercial message section, the number of changes in the state of the signal in the commercial message section and the time of a change in the state of the signal in the commercial message section.

22. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 1, wherein said user-selectable index is one of a plurality of user-selectable indices each of which correspond to an extracted signal from said input signal, said display means displays each of said indices, and further comprising:

an index information selecting means for selecting one index from said displayed plurality of indices; and

a retrieving means for retrieving one of the recorded extracted signals corresponding to said selected one index.

23. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 2, further comprising:

a retrieving means for retrieving one of the recorded extracted signals substantially agreeing with said commercial message from said recording means, using said commercial message in a part of the section or in the entire section or a characteristic value characterizing the commercial message as a retrieving condition.

24. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 2, further comprising:

a retrieving means for retrieving one of the recorded extracted signals substantially agreeing with said commercial message from said recording means, using a part or all of said commercial message or a characteristic value characterizing the commercial message as retrieving condition.

25. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 1, further comprising:

a measuring means for measuring the number of times and/or the hours of appearances of a same commercial message.

26. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 1, further comprising:

a measuring means for measuring the number of times and/or the hours of appearances of similar commercial messages.

27. **(Currently Amended)** A signal processing method comprising the steps of:

detecting a commercial message section ~~from in~~ an input signal containing at least the commercial message section and the remaining signal section on a time division basis;

extracting a commercial message of the commercial message section ~~out of from~~ the input signal in accordance with the result of the detection of the commercial message section, the commercial message being extracted for subsequent access by a user;

recording each commercial message extracted for subsequent access by the user in response to the user selection, ~~the commercial message being extracted from the input signal by the commercial message extracting means;~~

extracting information from said commercial message section to be used as a user-selectable index representing said recorded commercial message, the information extracted from said commercial message section and associated with said commercial message being one of a starting image, a cut point image, a starting sound or an ending sound; and

displaying said index to the user in order to receive the user selection, the index including a plurality of commercial messages that were previously recorded and are selectable by the user for playback;

playing back a selected commercial message that was previously recorded from the index in response to a user selection of the selected commercial message from the index, the selected commercial message being enabled to be played back audibly, audibly and visually, or visually.

28. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 27, further comprising the steps of:

extracting a characteristic values characterizing the commercial message from the detected commercial message section;

determining a start time of the commercial message and a length of the commercial message section; and

each characteristic values of the commercial message in association with the commercial message, wherein the characteristic values include a amplitude characterizing value, a spectrum characterizing value, a linear prediction coefficient, a brightness histogram, a color histogram, an average luminance of a luminance difference energy, and a number of cut changes.

29. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 27, wherein said commercial message section detecting step is adapted to detect said commercial message section from said input signal on the basis of a characteristic pattern of the commercial message appearing in said input signal at predetermined time intervals and a characteristic value reflecting the probability of the commercial message appearing in the input signal.

30. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 27, wherein said commercial message section detecting step comprises detecting said commercial message section on a basis of predetermined guide information which is prepared to correspond to said input signal.

31. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 28, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is amplitude of the signal in the commercial message section.

32. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 28, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is a spectrum of the signal in the commercial message section.

33. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 28, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is a linear prediction coefficient of the signal in the commercial message section.

34. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 28, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is a histogram of a predetermined component of the signal in the commercial message section.

35. **((Previously Presented))** The signal processing method according to claim 28, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is a mean value of a predetermined component of the signal in the commercial message section.

36. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 28, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is a difference between two predetermined signal components of the commercial message in the commercial message section.

37. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 28, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is the number of changes of the state of the signal in the commercial message section.

38. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 28, wherein said characteristic value characterizing said commercial message is the time of the change of the state of the signal in the commercial message section.

39. **(Canceled)**

40. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 27, wherein said index is an edited signal obtained by editing said commercial message.

41. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 40, wherein said edited signal obtained by editing said commercial message comprises a set of signals at the time when the state of said commercial message changes.

42. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 40, wherein said edited signal obtained by editing said commercial message comprises a signal representing one of a starting part of said commercial message and an ending part of said commercial message.

43. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 27, wherein said index information extracting step-comprises extracting as the index a portion of the commercial message at a time when the state of said commercial message changes.

44. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 28, further comprising comparing the characteristic values respectively characterizing two commercial messages recorded by said recording means and discarding one of the recorded two commercial messages when the characteristic values of the two commercial messages are determined to be substantially the same.

45. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 44, wherein said comparing step is adapted to detect the agreement/disagreement of the two commercial messages in a part of the commercial message section or in the entire commercial message section by comparing said characteristic values.

46. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 44, wherein said comparing step is adapted to detect the degree of similarity of the two commercial messages in a part of the commercial message section or in the entire commercial message section by comparing said characteristic values.

47. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 44, wherein said comparing step comprises comparing the characteristic values respectively characterizing the two commercial messages on the basis of the distance as determined by using a predetermined distance scale between vectors corresponding to the two commercial messages, the respective vector of each of the two commercial messages formed from at least one of the amplitude of the signal in the commercial message section, the spectrum of the signal in the commercial message section, the linear prediction coefficient of the signal in the commercial message section, the histogram of a predetermined component of the signal in the commercial message section, the average value of a predetermined component of the signal in the commercial message section, a difference between two predetermined signal components of the signal in the commercial message section, the number of changes in the state of the signal in the commercial message section and the time of a change in the state of the signal in the commercial message section.

48. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 27, wherein said user-selectable index is one of a plurality of user-selectable indices each of which correspond to an extracted signal from said input signal, said display means displays each of said indices, and further comprising selecting one index from said displayed plurality indices; and retrieving one of the recorded extracted signals corresponding to said selected one index.

49. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 28, further comprising a retrieving step for retrieving one of the recorded extracted signals substantially agreeing with said commercial message from said recording step, using said commercial message in a part of the section or in the entire section or a characteristic value characterizing the commercial message as a retrieving condition.

50. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 28, further comprising a retrieving step for retrieving one of the recorded extracted signals substantially agreeing with said commercial message from said recording step, using a part or all of said commercial message or a characteristic value characterizing the commercial message as a retrieving condition.

51. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 27, further comprising a measuring step for measuring the number of times and/or the hours of appearances of a same commercial message.

52. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 27, further comprising a measuring step for measuring the number of times and/or the hours of appearances of similar commercial messages.

53. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing device according to claim 1, wherein said input signal comprises a video signal and/or an audio signal and said commercial message covers a commercial message section.

54. **(Previously Presented)** The signal processing method according to claim 27, wherein said input signal comprises a video signal and/or an audio signal and said commercial message covers a commercial message section.

55. **(Currently Amended)** A signal processing device comprising:

a first signal section detecting means for detecting a first signal section ~~from~~in an input signal including at least the first signal section and the remaining signal section on a time division basis;

a first signal extracting means for extracting a first signal in the first signal section from the input signal in accordance with a result of the detection by the first signal section, the first signal being extracted for subsequent play back by a user;

a recording means for recording each signal extracted from the input signal by the first signal extracting means for subsequent playback by the user, wherein said recording means includes a characteristic comparing means for comparing the first signal with each signal stored in the recording means and, in response to determining that the first signal is the same as another signal stored in the recording means, removing from the recording means one of the first signal or the other signal;

a characteristic value extracting means for extracting a characteristic value characterizing the first signal from the first signal section, wherein said recording means records each characteristic value of the first signal, wherein the characteristic value includes any of a amplitude characterizing value, a spectrum characterizing value, a linear prediction coefficient, a brightness histogram, a color histogram, an average luminance of a luminance difference energy, and a number of cut changes;

an index information extracting means for extracting information from said first signal section to be used as a user-selectable index representing said recorded first signal, the index including a plurality of signals that are selectable for playback; and

a display means for displaying said index, the display means further playing back a selected signal audibly and/or visually in response to a user selection from the user-selectable index.